

Words Left Unspoken

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Summary:

Inspired by a prompt sent to me on Tumblr. After the horrible attacks of Pennywise the dancing clown, Eddie Kaspbrak finds himself permanently mute. Confined to his room, Eddie is overtaken by a dark numbness and the only one who might be able to comfort him has been mysteriously absent. Will Richie be on time to save Eddie? And will Eddie even want to see him when he does?

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Eddie had been staring so much at his ceiling lately, he was sure he knew it by heart. The TV his mom had brought up was chatting excitedly about some new product, but he had stopped listening long ago. He didn't feel sad, he felt nothing. Part of him wished his mom would let him go to school, maybe seeing his friends would make him feel happy or just anything at all, but the thought of seeing them and not being able to talk to them, not being able to joke with them, was frightening.

Eddie lightly touched his throat and he swallowed painfully. It still hurt. The doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with him. Of course, his mom was having the best time of her life. She had dragged him to every doctor in and near Derry. She was even planning trips to go to hospitals across the state. These last few weeks, she had made a show of parading Eddie around.

"Something horrible happened to, my Eddie, it's been very tough on us. The doctors don't know what's wrong with him, so he is getting a lot of experimental treatments. I don't know how we're going to pay for all his medication and his signing lessons." His mother pulled a sad face when she told this story to everyone she met, but really she was revelling in the attention. Every get-well card, every balloon, and every teddy bear he got was proudly and carefully displayed at his bedside table.

"Look what your friends sent you, Eddie!" She'd say, having no idea if the person was indeed his friend or not, and she would make a whole show of finding a spot for it. Eddie felt like his room was beginning to look like a shrine, like he had really died down there in the sewers.

Eddie turned to his side and looked at the large teddy bear that was given the most prominent place. The losers had sent it to him and it was the only thing that he actually cared about. There was a card attached to it which they had all signed with little hearts and inside jokes... all of them except for Richie. Eddie didn't understand why he hadn't written him or why he hadn't visited him. He knew his mother had sent the others away when they came over, but Richie had

climbed through his window a million times already, so if he hadn't shown up it was because he didn't want to.

Eddie closed his eyes, hoping that sleep would carry him away. At least when he was asleep, he didn't have to deal with this numbness and the pain in his throat. Finally he dozed off.

When Eddie woke up, it was already dark outside. He got out of bed to turn off the TV when he heard a soft tapping noise. He froze in place, fearing for a second that It had come back. But, that was impossible. They had seen It die, and if it was still alive, It would be gone for nearly 30 years.

Eddie made his way over to the window and looked down. His heart skipped a beat when he saw Richie, but then anger overtook him. Richie should have come sooner. Eddie wanted to turn away, when Richie began to call out to him. Eddie cursed, or at least he tried to do, but nothing came out. The pain brought tears to his eyes. In a moment of weakness, Eddie opened the window before walking back to his bed. He was still mad at Richie, but it would still be better than being here alone.

He heard Richie climb up the drainpipe, but he didn't look around. He sat there on the bed until he felt Richie's hand on his shoulder. Eddie didn't look up at first, but when he did there were tears in his eyes.

I'm sorry it took me so long, Richie signed. Eddie's eyes went big and he opened his mouth as if to say something.

I'm sorry it took me so long, Richie signed again, doing the movements a bit slower and more careful this time. His face was scrunched up in concentration. A million questions raced through Eddie's mind: why was he here; why was he signing; why hadn't he come sooner? Eddie settled on the first question.

Why are you here? Eddie responded. His movements were curt but clear. He had been practicing a lot, even if he only had his mother to sign to until now. She had loved being the only one he could talk to like that, using sign language as another way to bind him to her.

I missed you. Richie looked at him with a pleading look on his face. His eyes seemed even bigger than usual behind the cokebottle glasses. Eddie, however, was not ready to forgive him.

Then you should have come sooner. Tears were burning in his eyes. Who did Richie think that he was? He had left Eddie alone for all these weeks with nothing but the ceiling and his awful mother to comfort him. He hadn't missed him, if he had he would have come sooner.

Eddie was crying now, his small fists raining down on Richie. He wanted to scream, but he couldn't. Richie let him wear himself out, not moving once to defend himself. When all the anger had left Eddie's body, Richie embraced him and pulled him close. Eddie was so tired. Everything that he had been through seemed to come pouring out. He was sobbing now, tears streaking his freckled face. Eddie cried noiselessly into Richie's shoulder while the taller boy brushed his hair and shushed him. They staid like that for a while

When Eddie looked up, he saw that Richie had been crying too.

I wanted to talk to you when I saw you, Richie signed. There seemed to be something more he wanted to say, but either he didn't know how or he didn't know if he was ready yet.

Seeing you would have been enough, Eddie signed back. His breathing was still unsteady. He had been so numb, but seeing Richie had made all his feelings come back at once.

I'm sorry, Richie signed, and Eddie thought he might cry again. Eddie reached out to wipe away Richie's tears. He always felt better when he had someone else to care for. All his anger was gone and he was just glad to have Richie back.

Promise you won't leave again.

I promise, Richie responded quickly, before adding, *Are you still my Eddie Pasta?* Eddie felt laughter bubbling up and he clasped his hands for his mouth.

"Did I do it wrong?" Richie asked, out loud this time. Eddie shoke his

head, but he couldn't stop laughing while tears returned to his eyes. It was just too much: the severity of this situation and then the horrible butchered nickname.

"I'm trying, okay!" Richie said, before he started laughing too. Eddie threw his arms around Richie's neck and they both tumbled off the bed. Eddie found himself on top of Richie, the taller boy's arms wrapped around him. He looked at Richie's dumb, beautiful face. For the first time in his life, Eddie knew what love was. He leaned down, very gently, and pressed a kiss on Richie's lips. When he was about to move away, he felt Richie's hand in his hair pulling him close again. They shared a long, heartfelt kiss, and Eddie believed he could truly be happy again. As long as he had his Trashmouth with him. He opened his eyes, his face flushed and butterflies in his stomach.

I love you, Richie signed and Eddie kissed him again.